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'A Support Net': Evaluating a novel mental health-related online educational tool

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'A Support Net'

Evaluating a novel mental health-related online educational tool

POSTER BOARD 3

International Society for Research on Internet Interventions (ISRII)

Auckland, New Zealand,
13-15 February 2019

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Context

Although the value of individual and society-level health literacy related to physical wellbeing has long been recognised, there has been considerably less work focused on **mental health literacy** [1,2]. Which is defined as the ability to recognise, manage, and prevent mental ill-health [1].

Recent work has highlighted the potential of mental health literacy interventions, which can increase the recognition of mental health disorders and can also facilitate help-seeking behaviours [3]. Prior work in the field indicates interventions that comprise of interactive or additional elements, such as video illustrations or quizzes, are helpful in terms of enhancing mental health literacy [3]. To date, interventions in the area have mostly been developed in Australia [3].

We considered it important to create a **freely available interactive educational tool** focused on mental health literacy in the United Kingdom, because prior research has reinforced the importance of creating resources that are culture and context specific (e.g. developed and applied to everyday situations) [4]. We have therefore created a bespoke educational tool, called **A Support Net**, and evaluated its uptake.

Methods

We captured data including: total learners; completion rates; learner country; and time spent using A Support Net.

Results

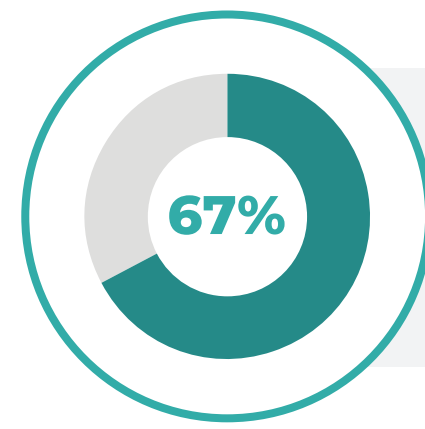
A Support Net was launched on the 1st of September 2017.



To date, there have been **13,442 users**.



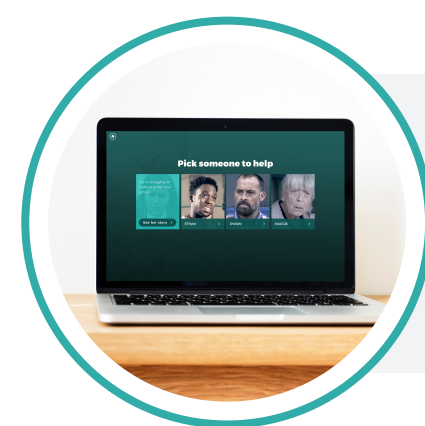
The most frequently used vignette, **Lily**, was accessed by 4,179 learners...



...with 2,786 people finishing this case study (a completion rate of **67%**).



Most learners have visited the tool from the **United Kingdom**.



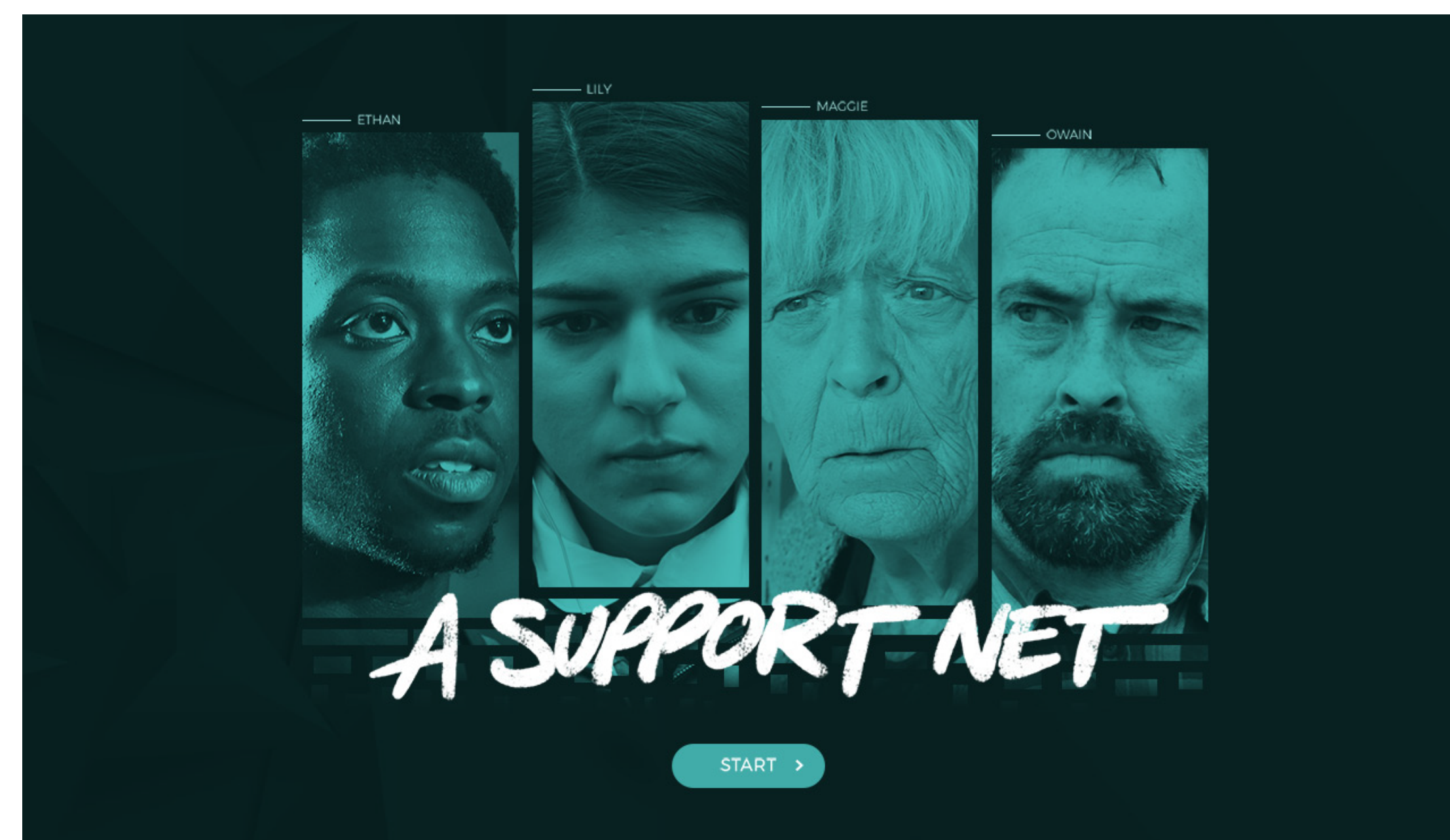
86% of learners used the tool on their PC.



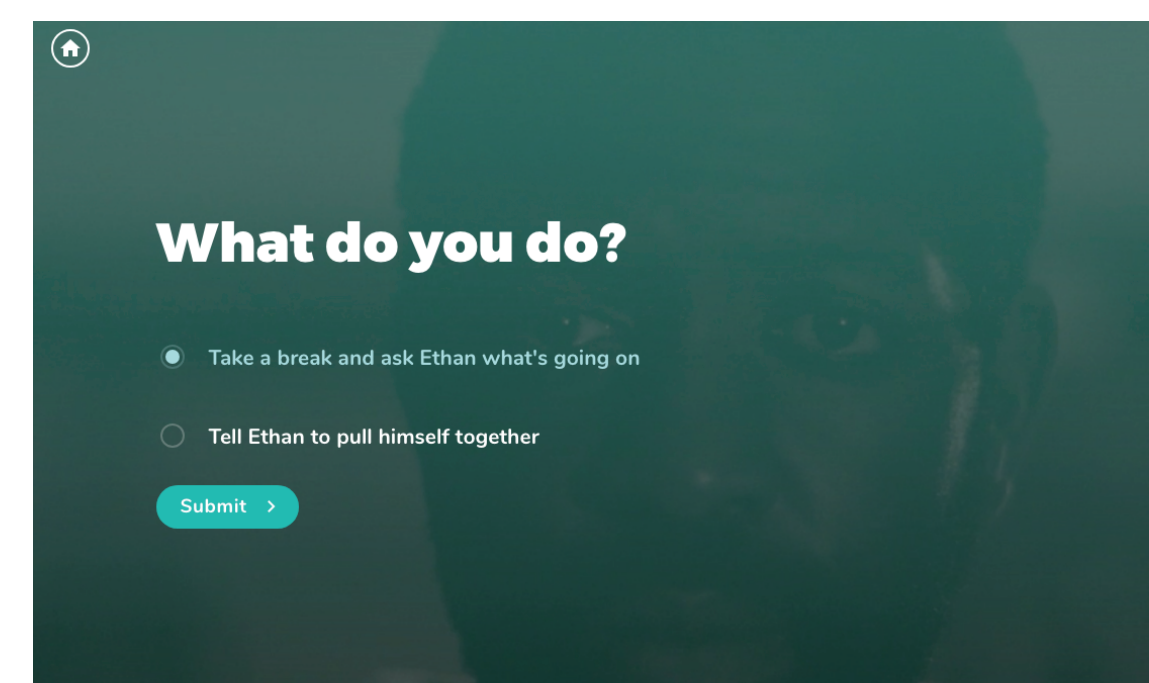
The average amount of time spent using the tool on a PC is **7 minutes**.

Intervention

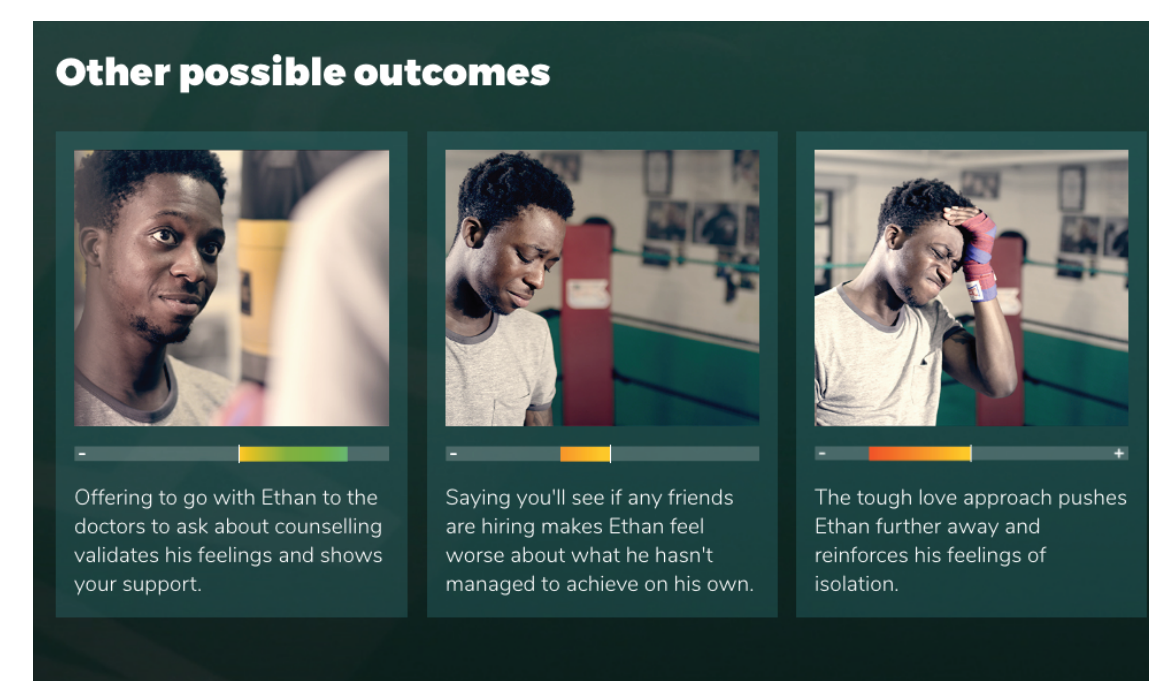
A Support Net uses **immersive video vignettes** to demonstrate realistic case studies of people struggling with specific mental health problems (Ethan, Lily, Maggie and Owain). Learners are then encouraged to reflect on how best to support that person.



View the full
'A Support Net'
interactive here



Learners are introduced to the four different people, but as is often the case in everyday life, it is not immediately apparent what mental health problems the person is experiencing. Learners are tasked with making sequential decisions around supporting someone experiencing symptoms of **anxiety**, **depression** or **psychosis**, or **substance misuse problems**, as they learn more about the issues and context from the vignettes.



The aim is to have a **'supportive impact'**, and this is visually displayed with a Your Impact scale. Upon completing a vignette, learners see a summary analysis of their decisions, including how other learners have interpreted the case study, the possible outcomes and their impact/s, as well as a brief synopsis about the person's mental health problems.

Conclusions

Overall engagement, evidenced by the number of total learners, has been encouraging, and this could indicate that the use of video vignettes is an **engaging intervention strategy**. However the completion rates for all four scenarios is low. As with prior research carried out in this area, we did not use formal assessments with adequate psychometric properties to evaluate the impact of A Support Net [4].

For future interactive tools of this kind, we plan to embed a brief yet robust measure of possible changes in mental health literacy.

References

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